MINUTES OF MEETING OF COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
HELD IN WASHINGTON, D. C., FRIDAY, JANUARY 23, 1920.

The fourth meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts during the fiscal year 1920 was held in its offices at 1729 New York Avenue, northwest, Washington, D. C., on Friday, January 23, 1920.

The following members were present:

Mr. Moore, Chairman;
Mr. Adams;
Mr. Platt;
Mr. Greenleaf;

also Colonel C. S. Ridley, Secretary and Executive Officer.

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m.

1. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PRECEDING MEETING: The minutes of the preceding meeting held in Washington, D. C., December 12, 1919, were approved.

2. FREER ART GALLERY: Mr. Moore brought to the attention of the Commission the following letter addressed to him by Colonel Frank J. Hecker, 915 Union Trust Building, Detroit, Michigan:

January 5th, 1920

"Dear Mr. Moore:

I am pleased to enclose herewith copy of Mr. Freer's will and codicil thereto. In the latter he required that the National Fine Arts Commission shall be consulted as to all future purchases for the collection.

There is at this time consideration being given to the acquisition of some very important Chinese wood sculptures respecting which Dr. Walcott has written me, and which, if purchased, would come under the provisions of Article 4 of the Codicil.

With best wishes that you will be blessed with continued health and happiness during the New Year,

Ever sincerely yours,

(signed) FRANK J. HECKER."

To comply with requirements set forth in Mr. Freer's will Mr. Platt and Mr. Adams were appointed a committee to represent the Commission of Fine Arts in deciding upon purchases for the Freer Art Gallery, such committee to act in conjunction with persons that Mr. Freer has specified in his will for this purpose. As to a time when it was thought that the Freer Gallery might be opened Mr. Platt said possibly in the middle of next winter.

3. VICTORY MEDAL: Mr. Adams reported that the work of producing the master die and bars for the Victory Medal is progressing and it is thought will soon be completed. The die for the reverse was reported complete, and that for the obverse is receiving particular attention at the present time. It is expected that the master die will be completed in about two weeks. Mr. Moore reported having received an inquiry from Major C. F. Burkhardt, office of the Quartermaster General, who has been designated to represent the War Department in the production of the Victory Medal, and that he was advised as to the progress of the work.

4. NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL: Mr. Moore reported that a short time ago he was in conference with a committee of the National Research Council. This committee had been discussing with Mr. Goodhue designs for a building of the National Academy of Sciences at Twenty-third and B Streets, northwest, near the Lincoln Memorial, and suggested a style of building supposed to be of the classical type, but which did not meet with Mr. Goodhue's approval. Mr. Moore reported that the style of design for this building should be in harmony with the Lincoln Memorial, and that he believes Mr. Goodhue competent to make such design if given freedom in the work.

5. SUPREME SACRIFICE MEMORIAL FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: Mr. Jerome Connor appeared before the Commission with a revised design of the lettering of the War Memorial for the District of Columbia. The Commission thought the

dedicatory inscription should not be simply in the form of a paragraph, but should be of the order of the Roman type of inscription, namely, large and small letters, and long and short lines, suitably arranged. The Commission recommended the following:

DEDICATED BY THE EMPLOYEES OF
THE GOVERNMENT
of the
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Mr. Connor was requested to make a careful study of the lettering and the measurements for the inscription; no change to be made in the names as shown in the design submitted.

6. MEMORIAL TABLET FOR THE FOREST SERVICE: Mr. R. V. Reynolds, Chairman, and Mr. J. M. Witherow, of the War Memorial Committee of the Forest Service, appeared before the Commission in behalf of their memorial tablet. The matter had been placed in the care of Mr. Adams as a committee to confer with Tiffany and Company, New York City, to whom the Forest Service gave the contract for producing the tablet. Mr. Adams reported that Tiffany and Company will gladly make a new design for a memorial tablet since the former one submitted was not satisfactory, but that the question of just what kind of a tablet would be suitable to the Forest Service should be given further attention. Mr. Platt suggested that they secure a simple architectural tablet in marble with fine lettering, which suggestion the Commission endorsed, and requested that Mr. Reynolds take up this matter with the Memorial Committee of the Forest Service and report to the Commission, such information to be communicated to Mr. Adams who would take up the matter further with Tiffany and Company.

7. MEMORIAL TABLET FOR THE INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION: Mr. A. Holmead, Assistant Secretary of the Interstate Commerce Commission, appeared

before the Commission of Fine Arts in behalf of the memorial for the twelve boys of the Interstate Commerce Commission who lost their lives in the World War. Mr. Holmead reported that 1,211 out of 2,200 of their employees had entered the service, but that this memorial is to commemorate the twelve boys who lost their lives. The building, he said, is not owned by the Commission but they have occupied it for years and there is no intention of moving at the present time; that the memorial is to be in the nature of a tablet which can be located at a very suitable place in the vestibule of their building. Mr. Holmead reported that $800.00 was at hand for this tablet and that at least fifty designs had been secured from different firms, which, however, he understood had not met with the approval of the Commission of Fine Arts. Mr. Holmead was advised that the designs of tablets submitted were not considered satisfactory, and that in the meantime the matter had been referred to Mr. Kendall as a committee, who had recommended a simple marble tablet with fine lettering. As for securing a satisfactory design of the tablet Mr. Holmead was advised this would be a matter which would be left with the Interstate Commerce Commission. Mr. Holmead stated that while he had thought a simple bronze tablet would be very acceptable he would be pleased to favor such design as would be approved by the Commission of Fine Arts, and that he hoped to be able to secure designs from a good designer from which a suitable one may be selected, to be submitted to the Commission of Fine Arts for approval.

8. AMERICAN CEMETERIES IN FRANCE: Mr. Elisha Betts Lewis, of Kinston, North Carolina, Auditor for the Woodmen of the World, a fraternal organization numbering nearly a million members, appeared before the Commission in behalf of a proposition to erect a suitable war memorial in one of the American Cemeteries in France. Mr. Lewis said he had been referred to the Commission of Fine Arts

by Colonel C. C. Pierce, Chief of the Graves Registration Service, office of the Quartermaster General. Mr. Moore reported that he had just heard from Colonel Pierce advising that the Quartermaster General's office had submitted a recommendation to the Secretary of War for the purchase of five hundred or six hundred acres for one large American Cemetery in France, such cemetery to be sub-divided so that one section may be used for the burial of the men who were slain in the Battle of the Argonne, of Belleau-Woods, etc; that there should be roads, walks, and places for suitable memorials; the design for this large National Cemetery to be approved by the Commission of Fine Arts. The American Cemetery at Suresnes is to remain intact.

It was Colonel Pierce's suggestion that no organization be given authority to erect a memorial in the American Cemeteries in France until action had been taken by the Secretary of War upon the recommendation above mentioned submitted to him. The Commission of Fine Arts concurred in this, and suggested to Mr. Lewis that in the meantime he may, if he thought it desirable, secure funds for the erection of the proposed war memorial but to leave the question of selecting a design until such time as it could be definitely determined just where it will be located.

9. INSIGNIA FOR THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE: Under date of January 6th the following communication was received from the National Park Service:

> "I am transmitting herewith a National Park Service design which it is proposed to use not only on the uniforms and sleeves of our park officials and employees, but on trail, road, fire, and other signs throughout national park and monument areas. As these areas cover 12,674 sq. miles and 8,111,360 acres many thousands of signs bearing this design will be needed. Park and monument visitors will become acquainted with it as the sign of the Park Service and associate it with their needs. Naturally, as signs bearing this design will be distributed in such large numbers and exert their influence on hundreds of thousands of visitors to the parks every year, we want the lettering and design to be the best, -- simple and dignified.

"I am transmitting herewith a sketch for a Yosemite National Park boundary line sign, which shows the Service design at the left. Will the Commission be so good as to give the National Park Service the benefit of their criticisms and suggestions as to the sufficiency from an artistic standpoint of the lettering and design as shown, bearing in mind the manifold purposes for which the design is intended? The Forest Service sign also enclosed is merely to show the effect in enamel of such signs".

Mr. Stephen T. Mather, Director, and Mr. Arno B. Cammerer, Assistant Director, of the National Park Service, were present. The letter and exhibits had been referred to Mr. Adams as a committee for review. Mr. Adams reported that he had given them careful attention and that he had also brought them to the attention of Mr. Platt. Mr. Adams said the insignia for the uniforms were generally good, but that the design for the signs to be used in the National Parks ought to be simplified. The letters "U. S." could be omitted because of the word "National" used, and it would make the design clearer. Simplifying and improving the designs for the signs may be accomplished by submitting them to a good architectural firm. The Commission concurred in this recommendation.

10. EAST POTOMAC PARK, TREE PLAN FOR PICNIC GROVE: A detailed tree planting plan, embodying the revisions suggested at the last meeting, was presented by Colonel Ridley for the picnic grove within the area bounded in red, designed by Mr. I. W. Payne, Landscape Architect. This embraced an increase in the number of the Willow Oaks used at the inner boundaries of the grove in order to secure a rapid growing tree of suitable character and to make a proper transition from the Weeping Willows along the waterside to the proposed interior planting of various species of oaks.

Further, an axial relation of the vista is to be preserved, run-

ning lengthwise the grove and terminating on the proposed comfort and shelter station at the north end of the picnic grove.

11. GRANT CIRCLE, RESERVATION 312: Two colored pencil studies of this reservation were submitted, Plan A and Plan B. In each plan submitted both New Hampshire and Illinois Avenues were recognized as dominant elements of the design to be recognized in not only the walk system across the circle but also in the arrangement of the proposed trees to allow of necessary pedestrian traffic.

Plan A featured in a concentric arrangement, a tree planting space, a hedge with seats and a path in the order named beginning at the outer edge of the circle, while the walks were curved to lead the foot traffic directly through the park.

Plan B showed a similar arrangement as last mentioned but without the hedge and in addition an added row of trees, while the walks were mainly straight with the exception of certain minor walks.

In each of the above plans two drinking fountains were featured "on axis" with Varnum Street.

Mr. Greenleaf of the Commission brought up the question of using a grass panel across the circle in relation to New Hampshire and Illinois Avenues. It was felt upon further consideration by Mr. Platt, that the elements of the design could be somewhat simplified by omitting the grass panel and substituting a series of walks, each being appropriately related to the center line of the particular street or avenue extended and carried through; and further that the center of the circle be reserved for a fountain of large proportions.

The use of the outer planting, hedge and walk, as suggested under

plan A was felt desirable by the Commission to secure a sense of privacy from the street and to eliminate dust from adjacent streets.

Further studies were recommended.

12. RESERVATION 70: The design and planting for this area was approved by the Commission.

13. LINCOLN MEMORIAL, PLANTING PLAN: Colonel Ridley submitted a revised planting plan designed by Mr. I. W. Payne, Landscape Architect, for the area west of the north and south axis of the Memorial to the Great Circle, using Magnolia grandiflora as the major background feature, with a large open informal wedge-shaped sector to the west of the structure, which was approved by the Commission, without change as was also the transition planting of Ilex opaca, Ilex crenata, and Pinus mugho - the latter planting being used to relate to the planting previously approved to the east of the north and south axis.

14. TABLET FOR JOHN PAUL JONES MONUMENT: Colonel Ridley brought before the Commission a design for a tablet to be placed on the John Paul Jones Monument. The matter had been referred to the architect, Mr. Thomas Hastings, who advised that a tablet might be placed thereon, and he made such design for the monument. The Commission gave its consent to the design submitted.

The Commission lunched at one o'clock and was honored by the presence of the following guests: The French Ambassador; Hon. Ronald C. Lindsay, Counselor of the British Embassy; Dr. Charles D. Walcott, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution; Thomas Hastings, former member of the Commission; Stephen T. Mather, Director, and Arno B. Cammerer, Assistant Director, of the National Park Service, who afterwards visited the Lincoln Memorial. After the visit to the Lincoln Memorial the members of the Commission returned to resume the session.

The Commission adjourned at four o'clock.

Approved: